



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

MONTANA WOLF PROGRAM WEEKLY REPORT

To: Interested Parties

From: MFWP Wolf Program Coordinator, Carolyn Sime

Subject: Wolf Program Activities and Related Information, June 6 – June 13, 2008

Contributors to the Montana Wolf Weekly are Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), Universities, USDA Wildlife Services (WS), the National Park Service (NPS; Glacier NP; Yellowstone National Park will be reported in the Wyoming Wolf Weekly), US Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the Blackfeet Nation.

Highlighted activities relate to: monitoring, wolf – livestock interactions, outreach and education, research, law enforcement, and other miscellaneous topics of public interest. The Weekly Report will be available on each Monday, covering the previous week. It and other wolf program information (including the 2007 annual report) can be found at:
<http://fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf/default.html>.

Wolf Monitoring Activities

Summer field work and trapping efforts are back underway after weather delays. Bradley and Smucker are working at the south end of the Bitterroot. Asher has been working in the Paradise Valley. Laudon has been working in the Swan Valley, and Ross has been working in Gravelly's.

Wolf - Livestock Activities

On the 9th, WS confirmed that wolves had killed a herding dog on private land north of Helena. FWP and WS suspect this is a new pair with pups based on reports from the herder and two mounds of dirt. WS was asked to collar and release an adult wolf to gather more information. Traps had been set, though pulled 1-2 days later due to cold temperatures and forecasted rain/snow. Efforts are now back underway.

On the 10th, WS confirmed 12 domestic sheep were killed by wolves on private land in the East Fork of the Blacktail south of Dillon. This is the same property where wolves had killed 15 sheep, probably killed two, and injured 14 on May 26th. Previously, 6 sheep were confirmed killed by the Freezeout pack on May 9th. Due to continued depredations in May, lethal control had been authorized and WS killed 3 adult wolves in very close the sheep on May 29th. These

additional losses in June led FWP to decide to remove the remaining members of the Freezeout pack.

WS investigated a report of a dead llama north of Whitefish and determined it was not killed by a predator.

Efforts to remove wolves from the Willow Creek concluded on June 7. After losses on private lands, the large pack was reduced by 5 earlier this spring and no further livestock losses have been confirmed since then.

Outreach and Education Activities

On the 10th, Sime gave a presentation about the MT wolf program at a course sponsored by the USFS called “People, Economics, and Forest Carnivore Management.” About 30 people in mid- and senior leadership positions from a variety of state and federal agencies took the course.

On the 13th, Sime gave an update at the Montana Stockgrowers mid-summer meeting. She covered the status of litigation, development of a wolf hunting season, and upcoming opportunities for public comment. About 75 people attended. WS State Director Steuber also gave an update and George Edwards (Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program) and other staff from WS also attended.

The Montana Livestock Loss Reduction and Mitigation Program has begun receiving claims and making payments to Montana livestock owners who have had confirmed or probable losses due to wolf predation. A total of five claims have been paid to date and a few others are in the process. Claims have been received for cattle, sheep, and an adult horse. If you’d like more information, contact George Edwards at 444-5609.

Research Activities

Nothing to report.

Law Enforcement and Related Activities

FWP retrieved a dead wolf on June 13, on the northeast end of Paradise valley. Wolf sw028M had been missing for a year from the Mission creek pack. Cause of death seems to be natural as the animal had sign of severe mange.

Other

Wolf Litigation: On May 29th, Judge Malloy heard oral arguments in regards to a request for a preliminary injunction (would place the species back under federal regulations) while the main northern Rockies delisting litigation proceeds. As of Friday June 13, no ruling had been issued.

On June 12, the FWP Commission considered a proposal to establish a quota for a wolf season in the fall of 2008, pending a federal court ruling on a request for an preliminary injunction. The

Commission approved a tentative wolf hunting quota of 75 wolves statewide and is requesting public comment. Last February, Commission had previously approved the structure of a wolf hunting season, including creation of three wolf management units. The proposed statewide quota would be as follows: 38 in Northern Montana's wolf management unit 1, with a subquota of two wolves in the North Fork Flathead Subunit; 22 wolves in Western Montana's wolf management unit 2; and 15 in Southwestern Montana's wolf management unit 3. . To comment, go to the FWP web site at fwp.mt.gov on the Hunting page and click on the red links. Comments may be mailed to: FWP-Wildlife Division, Attn: Public Comment, P.O. Box 200701, Helena, MT. 59620-0701. FWP is accepting public comment through July 18th.

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To learn more about Montana's recovered wolf population, the Montana program and to help FWP monitor wolves by reporting wolf sign, visit FWP at: www.fwp.mt.gov/wildthings/wolf.

To request an investigation of injured or dead livestock, call USDA Wildlife Services directly in western Montana / Helena area at 458-0106 or in eastern Montana / Columbus area at: 322-4303. Or call your nearest FWP representative to have your call referred to Wildlife Services.

To anonymously report a dead or injured wolf or suspected illegal activity, call: 1-800-TIP-MONT.